

# MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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### **COURT ISSUES ORDER ON STATE BAR'S DUES; DUES TO RISE, BUT NOT TO LEVEL BAR REQUESTED**

LANSING, MI, July 24, 2003 – Michigan attorneys' bar dues will rise under an order issued by the Michigan Supreme Court, although the Court-ordered increase falls short of what the State Bar of Michigan had requested.

The Court's order adds a \$15 annual assessment for the State Bar's Client Security Fund, which helps reimburse clients whose funds were embezzled or misappropriated by their lawyers. The Court also approved a \$20 increase in the portion of bar dues allocated to supporting the attorney discipline system, which includes the Attorney Grievance Commission and Attorney Discipline Board.

The State Bar had also asked the Court to raise the general dues portion, which covers the State Bar's budget, from \$160 to \$200, with a provision for automatic adjustments. The Court did raise the amount of general dues, but by \$20 instead of the \$40 requested, and did not adopt the automatic adjustment.

"We commend the State Bar for its commitment to fiscal responsibility and the fulfillment of its core functions," the Court stated in its order. "The efforts already made, combined with the goals set forth in the strategic plan, will enhance the legal profession and result in an organization that better represents its members and better serves the public at large.

"However, in light of present economic conditions and the uncertainties of the fiscal effect of the other changes we are approving today, we believe that it is appropriate to proceed cautiously with respect to requests for additional dues. Under the schedule announced today, the total annual dues paid by most members of the State Bar will increase by about 21 percent, from \$260 to \$315."

The Court agreed to other changes proposed by the State Bar, such as a \$50 late fee for attorneys who fail to pay their bar dues by the November 30 deadline. If an attorney fails to pay dues and the \$50 late charge within 30 days of receiving a late notice from the State Bar, the attorney is suspended from membership and the practice of law in Michigan. The attorney may

be reinstated by paying dues plus a \$100 fee.

The Court's order also provides that those who have been State Bar members for 50 years or more are not required to pay general dues, "but shall pay the full amount assessed other members for the client security fund and the discipline agencies."

Justice Elizabeth Weaver said she would "adopt an exemption from dues for persons who have been members of the State Bar for 45 years or more."

Justice Kelly stated in part that she "would grant the request of the State Bar of Michigan for a dues increase of \$40 together with an automatic adjustment provision. Also, I would exempt inactive members from paying an assessment for the client security fund and the discipline agencies."

The full text of the order is available at  
<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Resources/Administrative/2002-38-2003-14.pdf>

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